

1910

Urban District Council of Wigton.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

Medical Officer of Health.

FEBRUARY, 1911.



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HILL HOUSE, WIGTON,

28th February, 1911.

The Urban District Council of Wigton.

GENTLEMEN,

On reviewing the vital statistics for the year 1910, the death rate is found to be higher than that of any year since 1902, when the rate was about the same ; it is also 1% higher than the average of the decade 1900-09.

Seventy-one deaths were registered in the district, which upon an estimated population of 3455 show a death rate of 20·55 per 1000 per annum of the population.

To arrive at the nett mortality the following corrections are necessary. Thirteen deaths occurred in the Workhouse, 10 of which were of persons belonging to places outside the district, which must be deducted ; seven residents of the district died in public institutions outside the district, which are to be added ; with these corrections the nett or actual number of deaths of the residents is reduced to 68, equal to a mortality of 19·68 per 1000 per annum of the population.

The average rate for the decade 1900-09 is 18·62, and the rate for England and Wales for 1909 is 14·5 or five per 1000 below our rate for 1910. This may be accounted for by the high average age of our residents : it is worthy of note that out of the 68 deaths, 37 were of persons who had attained the age of 65 years and upwards.

We have had one death from diphtheria, which is the only death from a notifiable infectious disease, and one death from pneumonia following measles in a child who was temporarily residing and had not contracted the disease in the district.

Infantile Mortality.—Ten infants under the age of one year died during the year, equal to a mortality of 112·36 per 1000 births. The causes of death were as follows :—Two from diarrhœal diseases, two from debility, one from tuberculosis, four from pneumonia, and one from accident. The average number of deaths for the preceeding 10 years is 13·4, and the average rate 146·29.

Tuberculosis Death Rate.—Five deaths were due to tuberculous disease, equal to a mortality of 1·4 ; this is an improvement upon 1909 when the number was nine and the rate 2·5.

The rate for the County in 1909 is 1·4.

Birth Rate.—Eighty-nine births, 12 of which were illegitimate, were registered, equal to a rate of 25·76 per 1000 of the population and slightly higher than the average of the last 10 years.

The rate for England and Wales for 1909 is 25·6.

Infectious Diseases.—Twenty-three cases were notified during the year, viz : 14 of scarlet fever, 7 of diphtheria, 1 of erysipelas, and 1 of typhoid fever. Most of these cases were notified during the first half of the year ; the scarlet fever was generally of a mild type.

With regard to the diphtheria, two cases were in close proximity to a blocked drain, no special cause could be found for the other cases. The typhoid case was imported into the district.

Measures to secure the isolation of patients suffering from infectious diseases are carried out as far as possible in the absence of an isolation hospital, which I trust we are to have in the near future.

The drainage is inspected, and if at fault remedied and disinfection carried out at the end of the isolation period.

Four cases of pulmonary tuberculosis have been notified under the Public Health (Tuberculosis) Regulations 1908. We have no other system of notification of phthisis.

In known cases of phthisis, instructions are given to prevent the infection of other persons, both verbally and by the distribution of hand bills ; and when death takes place, disinfection is carried out by your Inspector.

Of the influences threatening the health of the district, the chief will be found in the defective state of certain houses inhabited by the poorest class, where imperfect ventilation, lack of air space and sun light conduce to ill health.

Although as mentioned in my report of May, demolition of a number of these houses with reconstruction would be the best remedy, a great improvement could be brought about by the substitution of sash windows for closed ones where necessary. These houses were inspected during the year and sash windows were recommended in 80 dwellings, comprising 127 defective windows. The alterations have been carried out in about half the number ; it is to be hoped the remainder will be speedily attended to.

A number of inspections have been made by the Nuisance Inspector and verbal notices given to abate minor nuisances which have been abated. No statutory notices have been given.

The dairies and cowsheds have been inspected and found generally clean and properly drained, but more air space in some of the cowsheds is desirable. The appointment of a Veterinary Inspector as contemplated will greatly assist in the production of a pure milk supply.

There are six slaughter houses in the district which are regularly visited by your Inspector ; they are properly supplied with water, well drained and ventilated. As it is not possible for the Inspector to be present at each of the slaughter-houses at the time of slaughtering, the only way to secure efficient supervision would be to provide a public slaughter house, which is a point worthy of your consideration.

We have no Inspector with a special certificate in meat inspection.

No carcasses, or parts of carcasses, have been found to be tuberculous.

The fish supply to the town is carefully supervised by your Inspector ; it has not been necessary to destroy any during the year.

Water Supply.—The water supply which is constant from two springs in the lime stone continues to be pure, sufficient in quantity and free from risks of pollution.

Drainage.—The town is well drained and sewered and as we have an ample supply of water, flushing is easily and regularly carried out.

The sewage is conducted to a sewage farm where it is treated by broad irrigation, a satisfactory effluent being produced, discharging into the River Waver.

The water carriage system of excrement disposal is universally employed.

The waste products of a tan-yard are treated in settling tanks which produce a satisfactory effluent flowing into Burnfoot Beck.

House Refuse is collected by the Public Scavengers from suitable receptacles for the most part, but a small number of ashpits is still in use, which are cleared at longer intervals. To insure better sanitary conditions these should be abolished as recommended in a previous report and the system of refuse removal placed on a uniform basis.

Housing (Inspection of Districts) Regulations, 1910, Article V.—As you have appointed a committee to consider and decide upon the best method of carrying out these instructions I herewith enclose for the guidance of the Committee a summary of what was decided at a Conference of Medical Officers held in Carlisle, on December 21st, 1910.

Midwives Act, 1902.—We have only one registered Midwife in the district whose practice is quite satisfactory : supervision and quarterly reports are made by me, the latter being sent to the Midwives Committee of the County.

The factories and workshops have been regularly visited by your Inspector and found to be in a satisfactory state. The underground bake-house mentioned in my last report is still in use.

I enclose Tables of Statistics, Nos. I, III, IV, and V, with Form 572 Factory and Workshop Act, 1901.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. BLACKLOCK,

Medical Officer of Health.